

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 6, 2004

Mr. Allan H. "Bud" Selig
Commissioner
Major League Baseball
245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10167

Dear Commissioner Selig:

I am writing to strongly urge you to abandon your recently announced plan to begin allowing commercial advertisements to appear on bases at Major League Baseball games. That such a plan comes on the heels of last month's proposal to advertise on players' uniforms makes today's announced placement of ads on the bases even more disturbing. It saddens me that this is the second time in a month that I have found cause to write to you concerning the inappropriate placement of commercial advertisements in baseball, and worries me that these are only the first two steps in an on field advertising blitz that could further demean the game I and so many other Americans love.

Baseball belongs to the fans, not corporate advertisers. The excuse that "other sports are doing it" is unacceptable. Imagine Joe DiMaggio charging for a first base bag bearing a "Road to Morocco" logo as he continued his incredible hitting streak. Try picturing Jackie Robinson leading off of a base emblazoned with "The Sands of Iwo Jima" logo before stealing home. Something tells me Bobby Thompson's "Shot Heard Round the World" would not have seemed quite right if he had rounded the bases with "A Streetcar Named Desire" logos underfoot. The images, I think you would agree, just do not work.

Baseball is America's game. Commercialization in the game is inevitable, but this is another step too far. Is it too much to ask that the playing surface and the players' uniforms be kept clean of crass commercialization? The game does not need another blow like this against the purity and tradition that those of us who love Baseball so embrace and admire.

Selling advertising space on the bases is a huge mistake. Any revenue that Major League Baseball would receive comes nowhere near paying for the damage that this decision will make to the league's integrity and the game's sense of history. Anyone who truly loves Baseball will realize that it is as simple as this: Keep the ads off the field and off the players' backs. There is still time to protect the game. I ask you to please stop this mistake before it happens.

Sincerely,



Charles Schumer
United States Senator